

Revelation 12

1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.

John saw a great sign or symbol in the sky. It was in the form of a woman who was clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head. It is interesting that the Roman Catholic Church believes that Mary is going to appear to mankind in this way in the last days. But this vision is not of the Virgin Mary, nor, because of the twelve stars, is it the emblem of the E.U., even though both are portrayed in a similar fashion. Instead this is a picture or symbol of Israel. Remember that Joseph also spoke of the sun, moon, and stars in relation to Israel (Genesis 37:9).

Genesis 37:9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

The twelve stars represent the twelve tribes, and the woman Israel. The moon likely relates to God's covenant with Israel (1 Chronicles 23:31; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 8:13).

1 Chronicles 23:31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD.

2 Chronicles 2:4 Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.

2 Chronicles 8:13 Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Israel (the land represented by the woman) is seen to be with labour pains, ready to deliver her child. What child? Some say it is Jesus Christ, but this does not fit the prophecy, and why would Revelation need to speak of the incarnation of Christ anyway? The woman is the Nation of Israel. The modern State of Israel came into existence in 1948 shortly after the Jewish Holocaust of World War II. Nevertheless, she has not come to the place where she completely owns the land. There are still constant wars in Israel. The birth pains will continue until the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. The “Child” is probably, as it is the most Scriptural and reasonable interpretation, the 144,000 Jewish evangelists.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

Next John sees a Red Dragon. This beast has seven crowned heads and ten horns (see Daniel 7:7-8 and Revelation 13:1).

Daniel 7:7-8 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

Here is the point: There will be two major players in the last days, and both cannot exist together. First there is Israel, represented by the woman, secondly there is the last days world power under Antichrist (possibly the E.U.) represented by the Dragon. The E.U. (which used to be known as the E.E.C., The Common Market, and E.C.) was originally known as The Treaty of Rome, and was founded upon ten member states. Only two major players existed at the first coming of Christ, Israel and the Roman Empire. The European Union is simply the Revised Roman Empire.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Satan is the supreme power behind the Dragon and his system. It should be noted that Satan is also known as The Dragon (Revelation 20:2).

Revelation 20:2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

The stars in this verse refer to the angels that fell with Lucifer and so were cast out of Heaven with him. They were cast out because of their rebellion. This verse also indicates that they will be the cause of further rebellion on earth in the last days. Satan will send his angels to earth to create greater opposition and rebellion in the hearts of men towards God before the end. The Devil and his earthly system will be quick off the mark to destroy the Nation of Israel before the Millennial Kingdom of Christ. If he can wipe out the Jews, then what Kingdom will Christ have to reign over when He comes? This is why the world's focus has been on Israel since World War II. Satan failed with Hitler, but he will try again with the

Antichrist. The Devil has sought to destroy everything God has created or planned since the Garden of Eden.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

The Woman brought forth a male child. Again, some commentators, especially those influenced by Roman Catholic doctrine, suggest that this child is Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary. As stated above the child appears to symbolise the 144,000 males listed in Revelation 7. These will have their own Rapture before the Antichrist begins to seek the destruction of Jerusalem at the close of the Tribulation period.

The fact that the “man child” will “rule all nations with a rod of iron” does not specifically mean that he has to be Christ, for we read in Revelation 2:26-27, “**And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father**”. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:2-3, “**Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world ... Know ye not that we shall judge angels?**”

It is interesting to note that the phrase “rod of iron” is used three times in Revelation: on the first two occasions it is connected to governing the nations, but in Revelation 19:15 it deals with Jesus smiting the nations in wrath, “**And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God**”. Believers will rule the Millennial nations with Christ, but only He can smite those who will not submit to Him. The word “rule” has to do with shepherding (Gk. *poimanei*); Jesus both rules (shepherds) the nations, and smites them – to strike them down (Gk. *pataxē*). “**Thou shalt break**

them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:9).

In both Testaments we find believers who will reign with Christ (Daniel 7:18, 27; Ezekiel 34:24; 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5; Matthew 19:28; Romans 8:17; Revelation 1:5-6; 2:26-27).

Daniel 7:18, 27 But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. [27] And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

Ezekiel 34:24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.

Ezekiel 37:24-25 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

Hosea 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Romans 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Revelation 1:5-6 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The 144,000 will indeed reign with Christ also (Revelation 7:1-8; 12:5; 14:1-5; Psalm 149:6-9).

Revelation 7:1-8 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 14:1-5 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn

that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

Psalm 149:6-9 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

Note: This text can be problematic for those who believe that the “man child” is Jesus Christ, but notice how as soon as he is born, he is caught up to Heaven, and how that this passage is prophetic in context rather than historical.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

If the “man child” is Jesus, as some teach, we should find an account of Israel fleeing into the wilderness shortly after His ascension. The fact that such commentators jump ahead 2,000 years reveals that the theory is suspect. Israel will have to flee for her life during the last 3½ years of the seven-year period. This is what the prophet Jeremiah calls “**Jacob’s trouble**” (Jeremiah 30:7). The Antichrist will turn against the Jews. They will finally realise that he is not the Messiah he claims to be. He will seek to destroy the Jews because they will not receive him as their God and because he will set up his own image in the Temple ... “**Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God**” (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The Jews

will flee into the wilderness, which most commentators believe to be Petra. This persecution will be levelled against Gentiles who have recently come to Christ also. It is very likely that this 'wilderness experience' will bring about the salvation of the Jews ... "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:25-26).

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

A great war will be fought over Israel. This war will take place in the heavenlies. On earth the worst of all holocausts will be determined for the Jews by the Antichrist. But this evil plan will be thwarted by Israel's Guardian Angel, Michael the Archangel. Three important truths are revealed here:

a) God has ordained that His angels are to watch over and protect His people ... "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalm 91:11). "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14). We are not permitted to seek the presence of angels as so many are doing today.

b) There are various orders of both good and evil angels. It must be pointed out that the Bible only knows about one archangel, and that is Michael.

c) It is the archangel Michael who protects and defends the people and land of Israel ... "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book"

(Daniel 12:1). Satan, right from the very beginning, has sought to destroy God's people (both Jews and Christians), but this final assault will be the most wicked of his schemes (see Revelation 12:12).

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

The outcome of this battle is already recorded in Scripture. The Devil knows what the outcome will be and what is going to happen to him. Satan and the fallen angels will be defeated and cast down. Cast down from where? Cast down to where?

a) Cast down from where? The Heaven of God's habitation? This cannot be true. It is better to see this statement as referring to the heaven immediately above our heads. Remember that the apostle Paul calls Satan "**The prince of the power of the air**" (Ephesians 2:2). Satan's present domain is the heavenly realm rather than Heaven itself. Satan was cast out of Heaven before the beginning of time.

b) Cast down to where? The Earth. It should be very clear that this passage cannot be referring to his original fall, because he was not cast down to the earth at that time. Instead he took up his abode in "**high places**" (Ephesians 2:2, 6:12). The term high places literally means "heavenly places". Again, he is the prince of the power of the air. The word "air" here means the atmospheric region." It must be noted that he has never been to Hell yet.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Here the Devil is titled The Great Dragon ... that Old Serpent. Jesus called him the father of lies (John 8:44).

John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

It is he who tempted Adam and Eve to disobey God (Genesis 3:1).

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Satan and the fallen angels will come to deceive the world on a grand scale (2 Corinthians 4:4).

2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

This activity has a twofold purpose.

a) He will make his last ditched attempt to overthrow everything and everyone that belongs to God. He will seek to introduce as much sin and deception as possible so as to force God to judge the world. He knows that the holy and righteous Lord must punish iniquity. This is why Satan attacks the believer first.

b) He is trying to get back at God for casting him out of Heaven. He cannot remove God from His Throne, but he will do all that he can to stop His children getting to Heaven.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast

down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Even in this darkest of moments in future world history praise is heard in Heaven. Here we have two facts about the victory and salvation won by the Lord Jesus Christ.

a) Satan's time is quickly coming to an end because Jesus is about to set up His Millennial Kingdom. That Kingdom will spell defeat for the Devil's dominion over the earth. These final 3½ years will find Satan in a frenzy because he knows his time is limited.

b) Satan will never be able to accuse or overcome God's people again.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Satan and his angels, and even the Antichrist, will be overcome by three valuable and powerful weapons.

a) The Blood of Christ. How few fully trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on Calvary! Satan hates what the Blood of the Lamb has and can accomplish. We can defeat his lies and tricks with what he hates the most – living in full assurance of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ.

b) The word of testimony. Proclaiming and confessing the word of God everywhere and at all times. Satan wants us to be ashamed of the glorious Gospel and that we are followers of Christ.

c) Loyalty to Christ even in the face of death. Are our lives so important that we would risk losing eternity for them? God grants true believers the strength to stand firm even when being martyred for the faith.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

The world is given a warning – Satan will be cast down to the earth.

He will use this opportunity to wreck and destroy through:

- a) The Antichrist system.
- b) The direct involvement of evil spirits.

He has a short time to accomplish his worst act of rebellion against God.

We must remember though, that he knows he is fighting a losing battle, so he is determined to take as many human beings to Hell with him.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

He will seek to destroy the Jews (worldwide?). This will be on a grander scale than Hitler's Final Solution. Maybe the Antichrist will have concentration camps set up beforehand for the extermination of the Jews (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Daniel 9:27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:).

2 Thessalonians 2:4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Will the world be shocked? No, we have become used to seeing refugee camps on our television screens.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

The woman is given the wings of an eagle. Some have suggested that this represents America airlifting the Jews to safety. This may or may not be so, but it is best to compare Scripture with Scripture here. Can this not simply mean that God Himself will make a way for the Jews? At the time of the Exodus He declared, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself” (Exodus 19:4). God did not “fly” the Jews away from Pharaoh’s wrath, but they were under His protective care. Does He need America to do this for Him? The two wings speak of God’s protective care and delivering power (Matthew 24:16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:21).

Matthew 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.

Mark 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains.

Luke 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

The prophecy of Zechariah deals with this time, and he states that only one third of Jews will survive the Tribulation (Zechariah 13:8).

Zechariah 13:8 And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.

These will be preserved during the final three and half years (Daniel 7:25; 12:7).

Daniel 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Daniel 12:7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

The flood here represents a great tribulation (Jacob's trouble). The idea is a sudden onslaught of wickedness against Israel. The Lord promised, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). The devil can do his worst but he cannot destroy the Jews. If he could, then God will have failed. The "flood" may be the forces of Antichrist trying to stop the Jews fleeing, just like Pharaoh did.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

The flood [a great army] will be swallowed up by the earth. This may mean one of two things, or a combination of both.

a) A natural catastrophe may cause the Antichrist to turn back from pursuing fleeing Israel. We must remember that the earth is undergoing the wrath of God at this time, so this natural event may be a result of that.

b) It could be a war or rebellion that causes him to turn away. “**And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over**” (Daniel 11:40).

Whatever it is, God will make sure that the Antichrist will not lay even a finger on the Jews seeking a place of safety in the wilderness. Where do they flee to? Where is this wilderness? Daniel 11:41 reveals the answer, “**He [the Antichrist] shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.**” Edom, Moab and Ammon will not be under the control of the Antichrist. It is to one of these regions that Israel will find refuge. Many commentators believe that the site will be Petra which so happens to be in Edom (part of modern-day Jordan).

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The devil, now really angry because he could not get to the Jews, turns on those who did not go in this final exodus. We can only speculate why this remnant chose to stay behind. It is possible that these are the Jews who never returned to Israel. This attack could also be levelled at those who did not take the Mark of the Beast and have pledged their allegiance to Christ. These people will face extreme persecution, but they can still be overcomers (:11).

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.